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iron-mongery in the hall. The wall-paper trade is represented by Woollams, who took a highest award at Chicago.

Chas. J. Barr & Sons, of Curtain Road, show good examples of Chippendale and Sheraton. They seem to have made a strong specialty of eighteenth century furniture, although they go in for the general cabinet trade. Barker & Lucas, on the other hand, make upholstery their strong point. Thonet Bros., of Oxford St., are great at Austrian bent wood furniture, another article that is having a pull of the market with us.

But we have given you illustrations and descriptions of the



LOUIS XV. CHAIR. BY LEVASSEUR.

things best worth seeing at the show and will not weary your readers with the smaller fry. There is one firm, however, who are showing here some novelties in decoration, highly decorated and simply applied clips for the instantaneous draping of curtains, a new spring cornice, some new pads for chair backs, to replace the antimaccassar, and other things. These novelties of Messrs. Philpot & Co. are so ingenious and useful that we propose to give you a short illustrated account of them in a future letter.

On the whole, the show is worth seeing and has done business some good. Undoubtedly the furniture trade here is in need of a filip of this description, for it was never in a worse condition.

## RENOVATING FURNITURE.

BY A. ASHMUN KELLY.



**D**EFACED furniture that is not old and old furniture that is not defaced may be so easily restored to their original lines of beauty that we wonder why so many homes contain shabby pieces which are eyesores, but which contain within themselves the elements of much beauty that only need to be brought out. If only we who cannot any longer, even by the utmost possible stretch of courtesy, be called young, could be furnished and rubbed up into our original, pristine youth, strength and comeliness, as readily as the ancient furniture can be made new

again, what a demand there would be for the human renovator's services! Surely, few of us would remain as we now are, lusterless, shabby, homely as pike staffs.

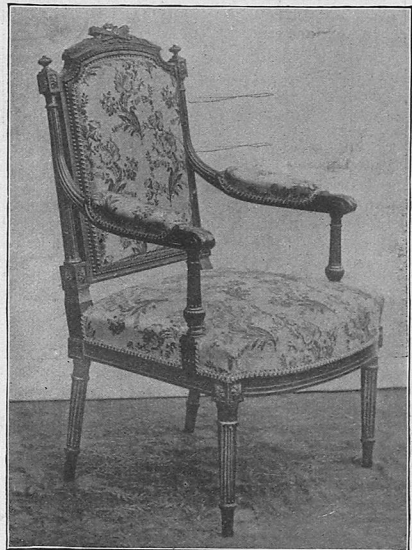
An old piece of furniture—and the older the better—possesses a possibility for beauty that no new piece ever has. Take an old sideboard. No new one is so rich looking or half so aristocratic. Take the old eight-day clock that belonged to grandfather, and which now occupies a choice position in the new hall. Put beside it your costly French mantel clock. It will be like placing a "chappie" beside George Washington. I cannot bear to think of it.

But the ancient must be polished up. Not like as it is done with grandmother's spinning-wheel, enameled white, gilded and decorated with fancy ribbons. That is an outrageous thing to do. No; we must simply restore to it its former glory. Nothing more, nothing less.

I have a bureau, the lumber for which came out of the family acres years ago, and which was fashioned into shape by the village undertaker and cabinetmaker. It is of light walnut, the door fronts being from the knotty and burly parts of the tree. It is plain and simple in its parts, but the drawer-pulls or handles are exquisite. Their antique hue, honest, not simulated, is beautiful beyond description.

It has been disregarded for years. At last I got at it, scraped it well down to the wood, puttied up all dents or other imperfections of the sort, sandpapered it off with fine paper, and gave it a coat of rubbing varnish. This in turn was rubbed with ground pumice stone and water until perfectly smooth. Then a coat of elastic finishing varnish was applied. This, after forty-eight hours, was rubbed well with curled hair, dusted off, and another coat of elastic varnish applied, this time being flowed on freely, in the effort to get on as much varnish as would remain and not sag or run. The result is that it is the handsomest and the most prized article of furniture we possess in our humble home.

It is always best to scrape all the old varnish from old furniture before applying new coats. Scrape every particle away. The work is not at all difficult. An old case knife, a plane bit,



LOUIS XVI. CHAIR. BY LEVASSEUR.

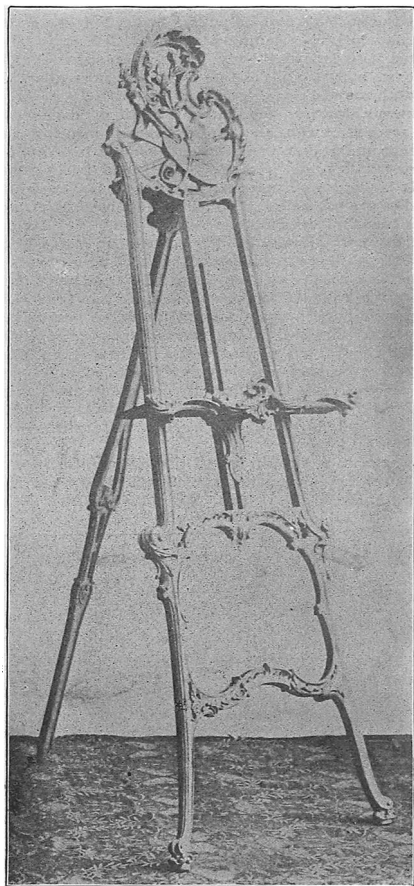
a bit of glass, these will all answer for the scraping instrument, supplementing these with fine and coarse sandpaper. Then be sure to dust off well with a brush before applying any varnish.

I am so used to talking to experts that I sometimes forget, when addressing amateurs, to be explicit in my directions, and I think many other professional writers commit the same error. We leave so many little things unsaid, thinking them of no consequence, as indeed they are not to the skilled, while they mean everything to the uninitiated. So I want to avoid this error.

# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

Be careful that every speck of dust is removed, I repeat, or specks will show up in your varnish. After dusting off, wipe off with a soft rag. Then do the varnishing in another place, where neither disturbed air or flying dust are.

Carriage finishers, sometimes, when applying the last coat of varnish to a costly vehicle, will strip entirely from their clothes.



LOUIS XV. EASEL. BY LEVASSEUR.

This, of course, is not necessary when varnishing old furniture, but it teaches us how careful we should be not to allow any dust to settle on our work.

Never "antique" the furniture. Nothing is more deadly to the natural beauty of wood than stain of any kind. Let time do the staining. Preserve the original hue of the wood as nearly as possible. Rosewood pianos, you may have observed, often appear with the surface shelling off in fine flakes. This is caused from the reprehensible practice among finishers of seeking to enhance the natural beauty of the wood with a coating of rose lake, a beautiful but frail pigment or stain. This lake does not adhere to the under surface, but peels off, taking the varnish with it.

Use no stain on anything you value. This rule applies to characters as well as furniture.

If you do not like a polished surface, such as varnish gives, rub it down with rotten stone and oil to a dead, satin, or egg-shell finish.

There are several mixtures excellent for cleaning off furniture, new or old. Here is one: Pure raw linseed oil, one quart;

spirits of wine and vinegar, of each a half pint; butter (terchloride) of antimony, two ounces; spirits of turpentine, half pint. Shake well before using. Use a rubbing pad made by rolling up a two-inch strip of woolen cloth.

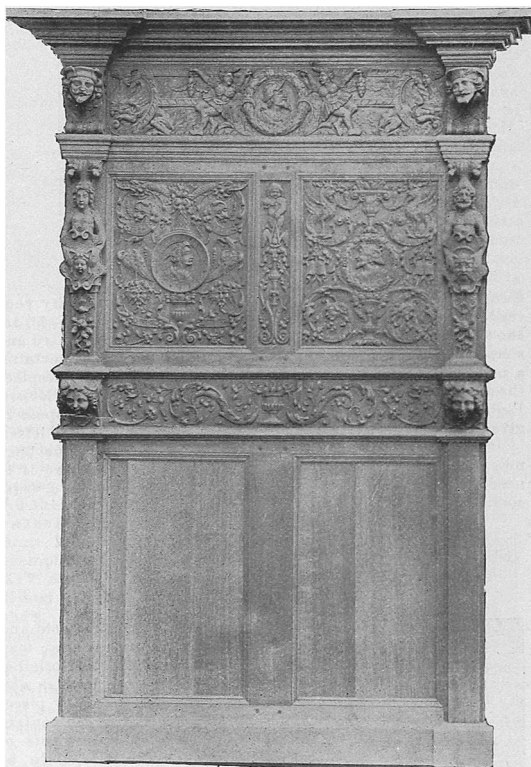
Several applications will be needed for new furniture, or for such as has previously been French polished or finished in beeswax.

Where the varnish has become old and tarnished, dissolve four ounces best gum shellac in two pints of 95 per cent. alcohol; add to this two pints raw linseed oil, and one pint spirits of turpentine. When well mixed add four ounces of sulphuric ether, and four ounces of ammonia water. Mix thoroughly. Shake well before using and apply lightly with a sponge. An excellent article.

For cleaning old furniture, take a quart of diluted vinegar, put a handful of table salt and a table-spoonful of muriatic acid in it, and boil for fifteen minutes. This may be kept in a bottle and warmed when wanted for use.

It is hardly necessary to say that before any of these renovating processes the piece should be carefully washed off to free it from all possible dirt.

For mahogany that has first been scraped off and sand-papered smooth, apply a coat of furniture oil (linseed oil, turpentine spirits and Japan mixed will answer), which let stand over night. In the morning hunt up the finest red brick you can, hammer it into a powder, which put in a cotton stocking



EARLY ENGLISH CARVED CABINET. BY KAHN & CO., LONDON.

and sift over the work. Then wrap a square block of iron or wood in a piece of carpet and rub the brick dust powder with it, rubbing the way of the grain of the wood, backward and forward, till a good gloss appears. If not sufficient, or if the grain remains at all rough, repeat the powdering, being careful not to sift on too much dust, as this and the oil should form a

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paste. When the surface is perfect, clean it off with a wad of carpet and, if you can get it, some fine mahogany dust.

The surface made by this process improves with wear.

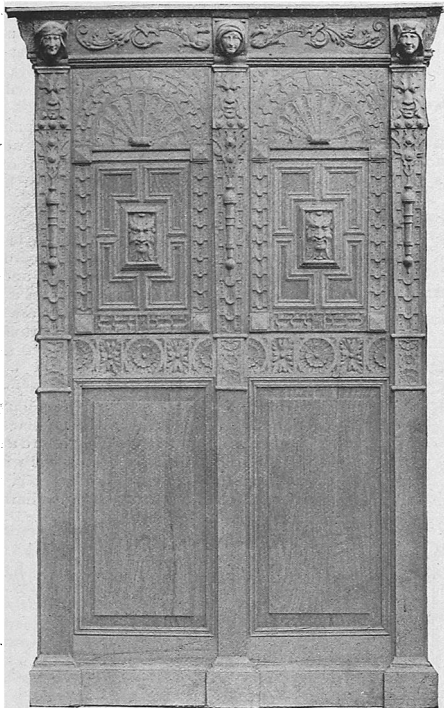
To clean soft mahogany or other porous woods, first scrape off and sandpaper in the usual way. Then wet the surface with a sponge of water. This will raise the grain of the wood, which can be cut away with pumice stone (fine lump)

hot, and rub with a hard brush. The polish may be renewed at any subsequent time by rubbing with a piece of fine cloth.

Such, in brief, are some of the means used in renovating or preparing furniture, and this work certainly will confer as much satisfaction and pleasure on the fair amateur worker as plaque painting, with more practical results.

## DECORATIVE NOTE.

THERE are at least two distinct styles of interior furnishing that one can adopt, according to his temperament. The perfection of good taste can be manifested equally in both. Some natures will prefer the elegant, sober, practical and reasonable modern furniture after the Chippendale, Sheraton or Colonial styles of those forms in which good taste has set aside over-extravagance of ornamentation. On the other hand, there are those who will reject the isolated individuality of such furniture, and who will prefer an arrangement of several luxurious divans, heavily freighted with pillows, with or without the accompaniment of constructed alcoves, of modern grille work



EARLY ENGLISH CARVED CABINET. BY KAHN & CO.

rubbing the wood in the direction of the grain and keeping it moist with water. Let the work then dry. Then wet again and rub. Repeat the process until the surface becomes perfectly smooth and the texture of the wood much hardened. If this should not prove satisfactory, try pumice stone (lump) and raw linseed oil. This will give a durable face to the work, which then may be polished or varnished.

The polishing of furniture seems to be of comparatively modern date. The effect is that a hard-faced surface is secured which is not so liable to become scratched as varnish, and what presents equally as brilliant and fine an appearance. There are several pastes and polishes used, a few of which are here-with given:

A good furniture polish is made with an half ounce of beeswax and a quarter ounce of alkaret root, which are melted together until the wax is well colored. Then add half a gill each of raw linseed oil and spirits of turpentine. Strain through muslin.

A polishing paste is made as follows: Take three ounces white wax, half an ounce of castile soap, one gill spirits of turpentine. Shave the wax and soap very fine and put the wax into the turpentine. Let the mixture stand twenty-four hours. Then boil the soap in one gill of water, and add to the wax and turpentine. This paste is highly recommended by practical men.

To wax furniture, use a mixture of two ounces white or yellow wax according to color of wood, and which has first been melted over a moderate fire, and four ounces best spirits of turpentine. Stir until cool or, if for immediate use, apply



LOUIS XV. CARVED CABINET. BY KAHN & CO.

and silken draperies. Both methods are in themselves equally beautiful, and may be equally devoid of all that is senseless and absurd, overdone and stifling.

PALACES on wheels are the new Wagner cars of the great through trains of the New York Central.